

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to improve their English grammar and to address the objection to Figure 3 in item 1 on page 2 of the Office Action. Specifically, page 22 of the specification has been amended to include reference element "S9," as identified in Figure 3. The amendments to the specification and abstract have been incorporated into a substitute specification and abstract. Attached are two versions of the substitute specification and abstract, a marked-up version showing the revisions, as well as a clean version. No new matter has been added.

Proposed drawing amendments are submitted herewith under a separate cover letter. Specifically, Figures 2A and 2B have been amended to remove elements "X1," "X2," "C1," and "C4." Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to Figures 2A and 2B in item 1 on page 2 of the Office Action is no longer applicable.

In addition, Figure 10 has been amended to replace elements "S30," "S32," "S33," "S34," "S35," "S37," "S38," "S39," "S40," "S41," "S42," and "S43" with elements "S0," "S1," "S2," "S3," "S4," "S6," "S7," "S8," "S9," "S10," "S11," and "S12," respectively. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to Figure 10 in item 1 on page 2 of the Office Action is no longer applicable. These above-mentioned drawing amendments are editorial in nature and do not add new matter to the application.

Claims 1 and 9 were objected in view of various informalities identified by the Examiner. Claim 1 has been amended to resolve the problem identified by the Examiner and claim 9 has been cancelled. Therefore, this objection is no longer applicable.

Independent claims 1 and 8 have been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 2. Further, dependent claim 2 has been cancelled.

It is also noted that claims 1, 3, and 5-8 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These editorial revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. Further, these editorial revisions have not been made to narrow the scope of protection of

the claims, or to address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these editorial amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Claim 2 was identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Claims 1, 3, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kitagawa (U.S. 5,835,798). Further, claims 4-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of Kitagawa (U.S. 5,835,798), Kitagawa et al. (JP 09-080500), Takeuchi et al. (U.S. 5,978,600), Noguchi et al. (JP 06-148731), and Vasey et al. (U.S. 4,970,540). These rejections are believed clearly inapplicable to pending claims 1 and 3-8 for the following reasons.

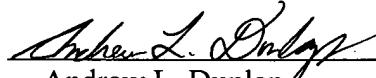
As mentioned above, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 2, which was identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter. Accordingly, in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, as discussed above, it is submitted that independent claim 1 and claims 3-7 that depend therefrom are allowable.

In addition, independent claim 8, which is a method version of independent claim 1, has been amended to include subject matter similar to that recited by dependent claim 2, which was identified by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter. Thus, in view of the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, as discussed above, it is submitted that independent claim 8 is allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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